

Testimony to be given on February 15 at Finance Committee Public Hearing regarding the proposed budget.

My name is Carl Noll, I am from Fairfield, I am an alumnus of the University of Connecticut, and have two sons with severe mental challenges who are served by the Department of Developmental Services. I am also an advocate for all like-challenged people.

About three weeks ago, on January 30th, the advocates for people like my sons rallied on the steps of the State Capital and screamed to the top of their lungs to "Save Our Safety Net". While this chant was going on, Governor Malloy appeared and during his comments tossed a bone at us in the form of 20 million dollars in new state borrowing for private nonprofits. The funds would be available to help agencies with capital costs that make them more cost-efficient in the long-run, he said. This could involve purchasing a new furnace to cut monthly energy bills, or consolidating locations to reduce overhead. This was nice. But it did nothing to help to save Our Safety Net. He did this knowing full well that his upcoming budget proposal would cut and additional 1.6 percent from the DDS budget for private care and 2.7 percent to residential programs for DDS clients. These, in addition to the 5.4 percent that was cut from these programs in January. Ladies and Gentlemen of the finance committee THIS IS THE SAFETY NET that we talk about, and it is being damaged and weakened even more. So our rally did no good at all to support these people that we care about so much. How can this state, still one of the most prosperous in the union, How can we, even in these perilous economic times, do this to these people who are nearly helpless. We continue to cut back their means of support, when the governor's budget allows 1.5 billion dollars in new funding for expansion to my beloved alma mater – The University of Connecticut. I recognize that this funding will be done through a bond program and not the state general fund, but the analogy must still be made. Couldn't the budget at least have provided, say 75 million dollars to restore the cuts that were made to DDS in January, and the proposed cuts in the proposed budget, and maybe an additional 25 or so million to give in our individual DDS grant budgets for the personal care providers who haven't seen pay increases in almost ten years. Couldn't it??? Compared to that 1.5 billion dollars that UConn is getting, this is, in the vernacular of the street..SMALL POTATOES..

Think about this ladies and gentlemen.. When we as individual private citiizens come to you as individuals pleading our case, you are all sympathetic to our cause. You try to understand our challenges, and you tell us you support us. You witness our Save The Safety Net Rally. and then you propose a budget that hacks a little more, and then a little more from the funds on which our sons and daughters survive.

My sons, and others like them, have the same right to Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness that is guaranteed to all people in the Declaration of Independence, as do the young people who in the future will take advantage of the programs that the 1.5 billion dollars provided to UConn will create. It's time now for the legislature to see the inequity of these expenditures, and restore the cuts to the DDS budget, and add additional funds which would allow these personal care attendants to get out of the 1990s wage wise. Since it is my alma mater, I am all for the expansion of the University of Connecticut, but couldn't we take care of these people too? Once again 50 or 75 million compared to 1.5 billion is relatively small potatoes.

I implore you, the members of the Finance Committee, to eliminate this inequity by increasing, not decreasing, the current amounts in these DDS line items in order to save and protect our safety net.

Carl W. Noll

890 Stratfield Road
Fairfield, 06825

203-334-5215 (home)

203-610-5765 (cell)

carlnoll@sbcglobal.net